

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING STEPHANIE SCHEIB

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 11, 2011*

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Stephanie Scheib. Stephanie is a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of the USA and earning the high honor of the Gold Award.

Stephanie's outstanding achievement reflects her hard work and dedication. Stephanie has exhibited unique and creative examples of service that have made a difference in her community. I am confident that she will continue to hold herself to the highest standards in the future. This is an accomplishment for which Stephanie can take pride in for the rest of her life.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Stephanie Scheib for her accomplishments with the Girl Scouts of the USA and for her efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of the Gold Award.

INTRODUCTION OF THE REMOVING EXCESS LITIGATION INVOLVING ENERGY ON FEDERAL LANDS ACT

**HON. PAUL C. BROUN**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 11, 2011*

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduced the Removing Excess Litigation Involving Energy on Federal Lands Act, RELIEF Act. This legislation would help streamline judicial procedures for causes and claims regarding the leasing of Federal lands for the exploration, development, production, processing, or transmission of oil, natural gas, or any other source or form of energy.

Excessive legal challenges have significantly delayed and in many cases prevented energy resources from reaching the American public. These oftentimes frivolous legal challenges have helped contribute to our nation's economic turmoil and skyrocketing energy costs.

The RELIEF Act would not take away anyone's "day in court," instead, it will simply streamline the process for all parties involved. This legislation would require that all claims be filed within 60 days of an action or decision and that any proceeding be resolved within 180 days of the claim being filed and gives precedence over other court proceedings. In addition, it requires that all appeals from the District Court be reviewed by the Supreme Court and that any proceeding be resolved within 180 days of the claim being filed. To

deter frivolous lawsuits, it also requires that any person seeking judicial review of any action under this Act shall pay the prevailing party's legal fees and other expenses, unless the Court finds that the position of the person was substantially justified or that special circumstances make an award unjust.

As the economic downturn continues and energy prices soar, our nation must do everything in its power to access the abundant natural resources with which we have been blessed. I believe this legislation can play an important part in our nation's economic recovery by alleviating current energy costs, while also helping to ensure our energy future.

HONORING THOMAS PATRICK O'ROURKE

**HON. THADDEUS G. MCCOTTER**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 11, 2011*

Mr. MCCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Thomas Patrick O'Rourke, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, son and brother and to mourn him upon his passing at the age of 75.

Born on February 22, 1936, Thomas O'Rourke was the youngest of six children born to James and Mary O'Rourke and attended both Detroit Catholic Central and St. Cecelia before graduating from St. Cecelia in 1954. Having honorably served this great nation as a member of the United States Army, SPC 4 Thomas O'Rourke was honorably discharged on September 30, 1962. Thomas married the love of his life, Mary Ellen on May 3, 1974. A dedicated and loving father to their four children, Thomas embodied the truest spirit of the Irish enjoying the boundless conversation and camaraderie the Gaelic League and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. He was affectionately known as "Mr. Notre Dame" among his friends at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post where he was an active member.

On March 7, 2011, Thomas O'Rourke passed from this earthly world to his eternal reward. Thomas will be deeply missed by his wife of 36 years, Mary Ellen. He will long be remembered as a father devoted to his beloved children Katie, Molly, Tom and Erin. Thomas O'Rourke leaves a legacy in his grandchildren, Ella, Aidan, Jack, Megan, Danny, Colleen, Maggie and the impending James, due in July. He is survived by his sister, Marge. Preceded into eternity by his parents, James and Mary as well as his brother James and his sisters Marie, Dorothy and Jane, Thomas was a wonderful man, kind to all he encountered. He will be truly and sorrowfully missed.

Mr. Speaker, during his lifetime, Thomas O'Rourke enriched the lives of everyone around him. There is no doubt that Thomas was a beacon of joy, hope and inspiration to those who knew him. As we bid farewell to

this exceptional man, I ask my colleagues to join me in mourning his passing and honoring his life and his service to our community and our country.

STATEMENT ON H.R. 998, THE "STUDENT NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT"

**HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 11, 2011*

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise as a proud cosponsor of the "Student Non-Discrimination Act," SNDA, introduced today by my friend Congressman JARED POLIS of Colorado.

I commend Congressman POLIS for his commitment to creating and fostering a safe educational environment for all students. The legislation we introduced today would assure equal protection for lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, LGBT, students.

As an educator for over 30 years, I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact bullying and harassment has on students emotionally, socially and academically. These problems are pervasive and persistent in our schools. The hostile environment created by harassment and bullying not only deprives students of the opportunity to receive a quality education, but also contributes to academic underachievement. Furthermore, bullying and harassment can, and have, led to life-threatening violence and suicide, as evidenced by several nationally reported incidents including cases in New Jersey, Philadelphia, New York and across the United States.

Existing federal civil rights statutes that address discrimination do not cover sexual orientation or gender identity, thus LGBT students are vulnerable to discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Furthermore, there is no recourse or legal protection when the rights of LGBT students are violated.

The Student Non-Discrimination Act is a positive step toward achieving equal protection for LGBT students. It will do this by prohibiting discrimination in public school based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. These steps will provide LGBT students a safe environment free from discrimination to learn and succeed in school.

The SNDA has goals similar to legislation I supported as chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus including the Safe Schools Improvement Act, which helps schools and school districts develop and improve anti-bullying and anti-harassment initiatives. We need all of this and much more, until our students are safe enough to study without the strain of discrimination or fear of bullying and harassment.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of the Student Non-Discrimination Act and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation to ensure that all our students have access to a quality education free from fear.

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